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Account Of Tryon's  
Raid



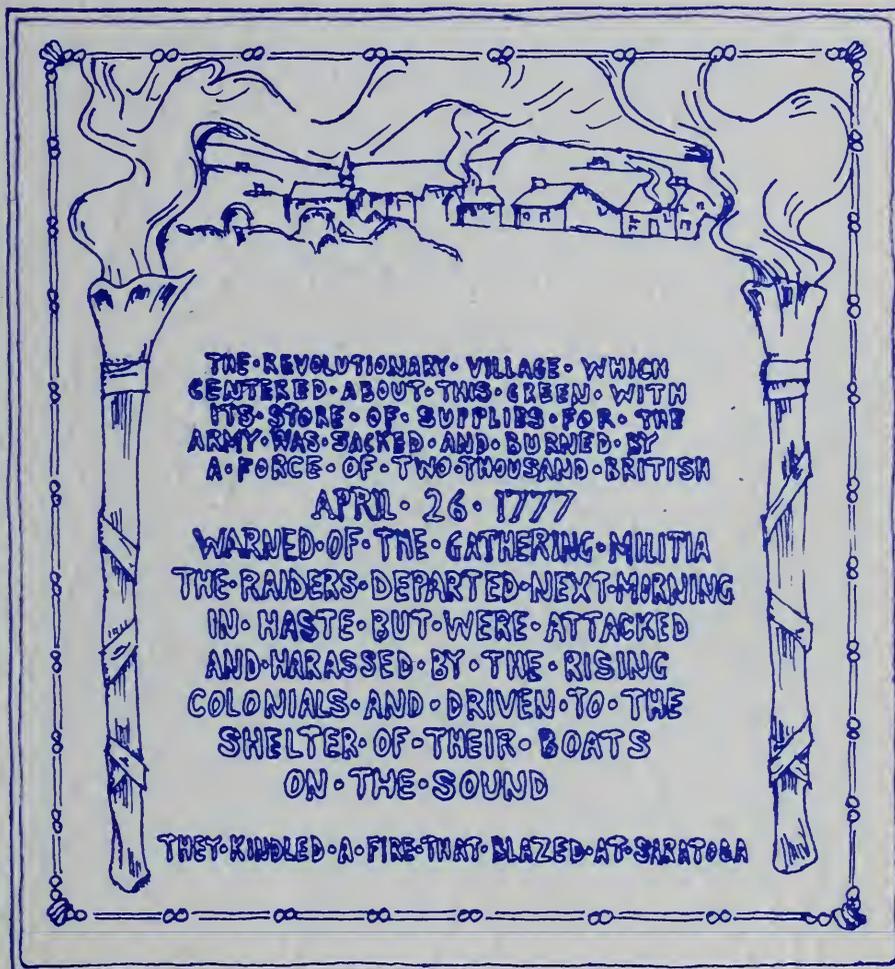
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# TRYON'S RAID



*Published on the occasion of*  
The One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary

DANBURY, CONNECTICUT

1927



*An account of*  
**Tryon's Raid on Danbury**  
in April, 1777  
*also*  
The Battle of Ridgefield  
*and*  
The Career of Gen. David Wooster

From written authorities on the subject  
with much  
ORIGINAL MATTER HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED  
Contributed by Interested Friends

*James R. Case*  
Compiled by  
JAMES R. CASE

1916

DANBURY, CONN.

1927

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## FOREWORD

Preparation of this little pamphlet in the short time allowed would have been a difficult task had it not been for the assistance rendered by a great number of friends interested in seeing a complete account of Tryon's Raid put into circulation previous to the anniversary date.

George L. Rockwell, the historian of Ridgefield, has been a very sympathetic cooperator, giving liberally of his time and advice. William Hanford Burr of Westport has been equally willing but less accessible. Others who responded to the call for information of interest were Daniel S. Sanford of Redding Ridge, Henry B. Betts of Danbury, Albert J. Potter of Joe's Hill, Mrs. George E. Beard and Mrs. Estella Sterling Cole of Bethel, Miss Agnes Bradley of Aspetuck, Town Clerk and Mrs. A. C. Bradley of Weston.

The assistance of Miss Mary Wiggin of the Danbury Library was greatly appreciated as well as the courtesy of Mrs. J. E. C. Brush and Mrs. Starr C. Barnum of Danbury. Through the kindness of Judge Martin A. Cunningham the services of Miss Anna Duffy were available for the stenographic work and she gave unsparingly of her time. It is hardly necessary to add that Mrs. Case was not the least valuable of my associates in the pleasant task of preparing the copy and completing the publication.

In the hope that our mistakes will be pardoned, our shortcomings overlooked, our efforts appreciated and the history of Fairfield County and our noble little State of Connecticut made richer we offer the booklet to the public.

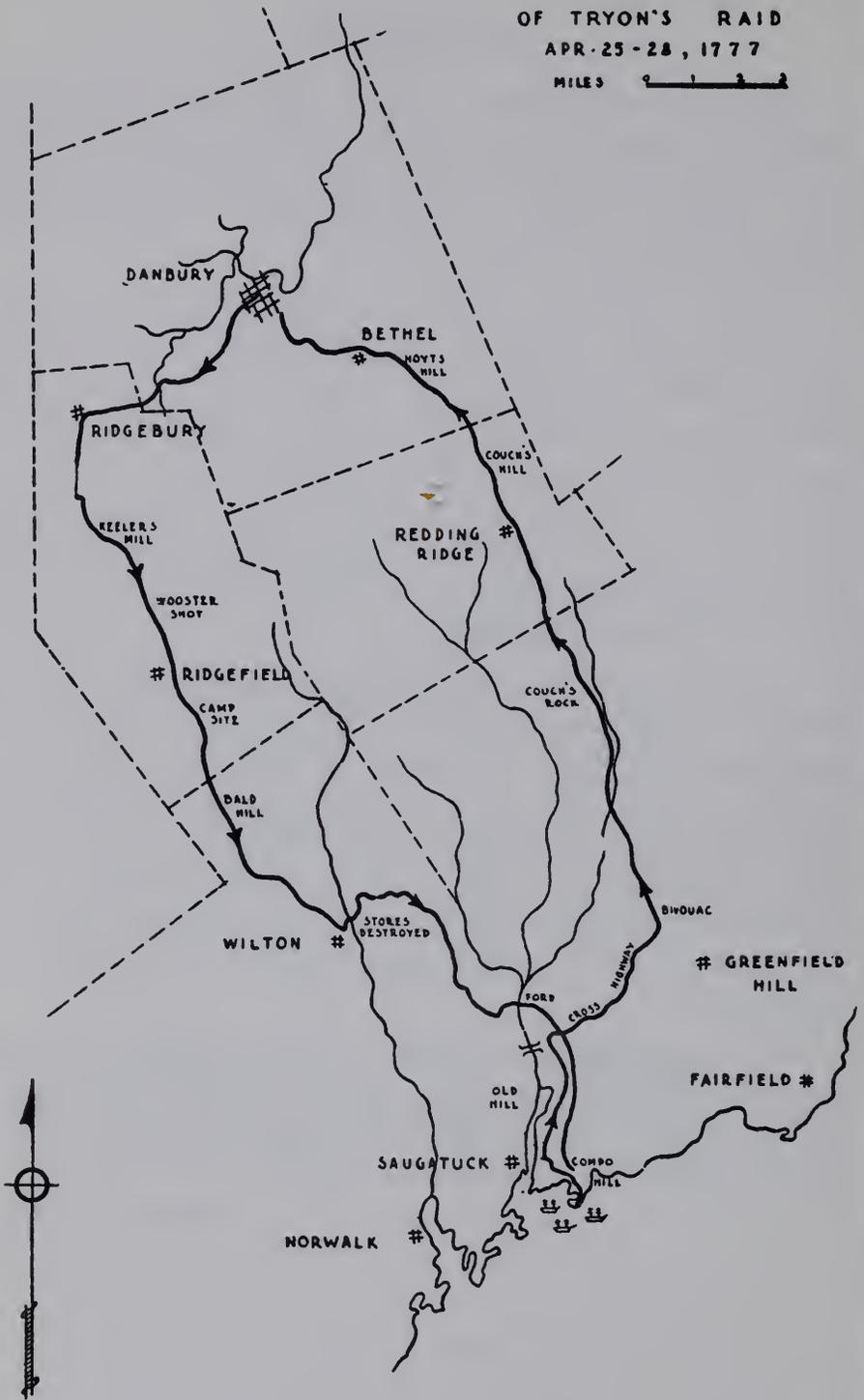
JAMES R. CASE.

# ROUTE

OF TRYON'S RAID

APR. 25 - 28, 1777

MILES 



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## CHAPTER I.

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### THE LANDING OF THE BRITISH

“The invasion of western Connecticut may not hold a place among the nation’s great battles, but it is one of the finest exhibitions of the promptness and heroism that has characterized the inhabitants of New England, in rallying to her defense, whenever her land has been invaded, or her liberties menaced.

“Indeed so brief have been the historians’ records of some proceedings, that today comparatively few are aware that Tryon invaded this State with a larger army than was led by Smith and Pitcairn to Lexington and Concord. Likewise the resistance encountered by the British was by a force as numerous and well officered, and not a whit less persistent and aggressive, than was vouchsafed to the enemy by the minutemen, who responded to the summons of Paul Revere. The opening scenes, in epoch-making events, awaken the deepest interest, absorbing attention and obscuring equally patriotic efforts on later occasions.

“A careful study of the condition and position of the different armies, and the scheme of operation for the campaign of 1777, as outlined by the British Ministry, emphasizes the fact, too frequently overlooked by historians, that Tryon’s failure to hold this portion of the State, prevented the co-operation of the enemy’s armies later in the year; thus contributing materially to the capture of Burgoyne, the first great victory for the armies of the nation. The condition of the American forces at the close of 1776 was most depressing to all, save the adherents of King George. The zeal and enthusiasm which animated the colonists in the first year of the war, as they pressed on to Boston to redress their wrongs, had subsided in the breasts of many and entirely disappeared in others. The resort to arms had brought a gloomy present, with little hope and a wavering faith in a brighter future.”

These introductory paragraphs are from the pen of William Hanford Burr of Westport who wrote a comprehensive article on "The Invasion of Connecticut by the British" which was published in the Connecticut Magazine for January, 1906. To explain the situation as regards Danbury itself we quote the following extract from George L. Rockwell's "History of Ridgefield":

In the latter part of the year 1776 Danbury was chosen by the Commissioners of the American Army as a place of deposit for military stores. It was selected because of its strategic position transportationwise as good roads for those days ran to the Hudson River and to the Sound as well as to the north and east. In "three cattle teams" (composed of a lead horse and a pair of oxen) quarter-master, ordnance, medical and commissary supplies had been gathered here from all over the "Provision State" where they could easily be distributed to the Continental troops and militia fighting up and down the Hudson River Valley to prevent the "Head of the Rebellion" from being cut off.

Tories and spies were altogether too plentiful in those days for the welfare of the American cause and it was not long before some of Col. Guy Johnson's corps of spies had found out the facts as is evidenced in one of his letters here quoted:

New York, June 8th, 1777.

My Lord,

In my letter of April last I mentioned briefly the state of matters at that time; a few days after a person whom I employed to carry messages to the Indians and obtain an account of the rebel garrisons returned, with a full state of the strength and circumstances of the Forts from Ticonderoga to Albany, which he obtained thro' his address under an assumed character, & likewise gave a particular account of a large magazine of military stores and provisions collected at Danbury in Connecticut; which I communicated to Sir Wm. Howe, who soon after sent a body of troops there, that effectually destroyed the whole, as he has doubtless acquainted your Lordship. . . ."

This was about the 1st of April, 1777, and that action soon followed is evidenced by a report of Admiral Howe as follows:

H. M. S. Eagle Off New York,  
April the 23rd, 1777.

Sir,

The General determining on an Attempt to destroy a very considerable magazine said to be formed by the Rebels in the Province of Connecticut, several Regiments were embarked in twelve Transports the 21st instant to be landed on the Coast of that Province, as Governor Tryon, who commands the Detachment, should require.

I have committed the Conduct of the Naval Department to Captain Duncan of the Eagle. He is embarked in the Senegal, and has the Swan also under his Command: Those Sloops being deemed of sufficient Force, and most proper for the intended Operation.

A Diversion was thought fit to be made at the same time, up the North River. Twelve Transports in which a small Corps of Troops are embarked, attended by the Ambuscade, Mermaid, Daphne, Rose and Dependance Galley, have been appointed for that Service.

The two Detachments sailed to proceed according to their respective Destinations yesterday.

I am, with great Consideration,

Sir,

Your most obedient  
humble servant,

HOWE.

The old records state that "on Friday, April 25th, 1777, a mild sunny afternoon, twenty-six sail of the enemy's ships were anchored at the mouth of the Saugatuck river in the town of Fairfield, a little before sunset and 2,000 well armed troops were landed on the long beach at the foot of the beautiful hill of Compo."

Gen. Tryon's orders, here inserted, show how the landing was to be performed:

H. M. S. Senegal, April 23d, 1777.

Major Genl Tryon's Orders.

Capt. Wemyss of the 40th Regt is appointed to Act as Adjutt Genl to the Corps under his Command.

The Troops to land in three divisions.—

The first, consisting of the 4th & 5th Regts under the Command of Lieut Colo Bird, who is to occupy the most advantageous Ground to cover the landing.

The 2d consisting of the 23rd & 27th Regts under the Command of Lieut Colo Maxwell.

The 3d consisting of the 44th & 64 Regts under the Command of Major Hope.

General Agnew will be pleased to disembark, any time after the 1st division has made good their landing, & give the other divisions such directions in regard to their forming as he may think necessary.

Two Pieces of Artillery to be landed with the 1st division, & the Remainder to follow afterwards as soon as possible.

As soon as the 1st Division has made good their landing, the Dragoons & Artillery to disembark.

It is recommended to the Officers, to keep their Men, as silent as possible.

The Troops to carry on Shore with them, One Days Provisions dressed, four days bread, a proportionable quantity of Salt (which the Men are to be carefull of,) and two days allowance of Rum, which the Comg Officers of Regts will take care, to have mixed with Water.

So soon as the whole is landed, the Corps to form two Brigades. The 1st consisting of the 45th, 15th & 23d Regts to be Commanded by Genl Agnew.

The 2d consisting of the 27th, 44th & 64th to be Commanded by Lieut Colo Maxwell.

As the Comr in Chief was pleased in his Order of the 21st inst, expressly to forbid Plundering; it would make Genl Tryon very unhappy, should the Troops give him any occasion, to carry them into execution, which the nature & importance of the present Service will require him to do; He therefore places his full confidence that the Spirit of Honor which has so eminently distinguished the respective Corps now under his Commd will, with the known Attention of the Officers, sufficiently incite them to a strict obedience to the said Order.

No Boat is to be suffered to go on Shore, till the Troops land, without leave from Genl Tryon or Captn Duncan.

All Horses that can be procured at landing, to be brought immediately to Genl Tryon."

As they disembark, it will be interesting to take note of the leaders and organizations composing the expedition, not the least in interest being William Tryon, royal Governor of New York, major-general of loyalist provincials, and commander of this expedition, who was a soldier by profession, and an officer

in the regular establishment of the British army. He was at this time about fifty-two years of age. He had been lieutenant-governor of the province of North Carolina, where he had shown much ability in the management of affairs, having suppressed with great severity the uprising of the "Regulators" in 1771. His military operations in the vicinity of New York were conducted with judgment and skill. Opinions vary as to his personal character. By some he is represented as honorable, courageous, and humane but these qualities do not always appear in his actions, as recorded in the accounts of his military expeditions into Connecticut.

We insert here a few sentences from Hollister's History of Connecticut which tells us; "There was no part of the world, that could awaken in the mind of William Tryon, so many lively and searching associations as Connecticut. The name of the little republic made his excellency's hair bristle with certain sensations, that a soldier ought not to entertain. From the time when that irreverent company of Connecticut dragoons had scattered the type belonging to the administration organ, through the streets of New York, and driven off his pet, Rivington, with hundreds or Tories—that were worthy of being elevated to the dignity of governor's horse-guards—he had felt the liveliest emotions at the very sound of the word Connecticut."

Major-General Sir William Erskine, quartermaster-general of the British army, was an officer who had fought at Fontenoy in his earlier years, and had commanded a brigade at the battle of Long Island. He superintended the debarkation of troops at Compo, and commanded the first brigade of Tryon's expedition.

Of the regimental organizations composing the expedition, the 4th, or King's Own Regiment of Foot, was the first to disembark. This was one of the oldest regiments in the British service, having been organized in 1680. When the troubles between the colonies and the mother country began to develop into open hostility, the 4th was selected for service in North America, and sailed for Boston April 17, 1774. A portion of

the regiment was at Concord and Lexington; it lost about fifty men at Bunker Hill, and participated in the battles around New York.

The 15th Foot, later designated the Yorkshire East Riding Regiment, was formed in 1685. It came to America early in 1776, and served through the Long Island campaign.

The 23d Foot, or Royal Welch Fusiliers, was recruited in 1689 in Wales and the adjoining counties. It was sent to America in 1773, and landed at New York, but in the following year was ordered to Boston to strengthen the garrison under General Gage. Four companies of this regiment were in the affair at Lexington, where the British troops suffered so severely, returning, it is said, "having their tongues hanging out of their mouths like dogs after a chase." The remaining companies formed part of the rescuing column under Lord Percy. The regiment suffered heavily at Bunker Hill, the grenadier company having but five men left out of a total of forty-nine who went into action, and it is also stated that but one commissioned officer of the battalion survived. In the campaign of 1776, on Long Island and around New York, the 23d bore a part, and, at its close, went into winter quarters on New York island. Its colonel was Major-General Sir William Howe, commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America, but the officer who led it in the Danbury Raid is not known. The Fusiliers afterward fought at the Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, New Haven, Fairfield, Norwalk, the siege of Charleston, S. C., Camden, Guilford Court House, and finally surrendered at Yorktown.

A detachment of the 17th Light Dragoons, twelve in number, next claims our attention. This small body of men was probably employed mainly for scouting purposes. The country was at that time more heavily wooded than now, the roads poor, and the whole territory traversed by the expedition of rough and broken character, unsuited to the maneuvers of cavalry, so that the movements of such troops were mainly restricted to rapid advances upon points where some temporary advantage might be gained. The appearance of these men

was worthy of note, as in uniform, equipment, and discipline they represented the flower of the British army. Information gleaned from various sources indicates that the dress and equipment of each horseman was as here described: Upon his head a metallic cap, sword-proof, surmounted by a cone, from which a long, chestnut-colored plume fell to his shoulders. Upon the front of the cap was a death's head, under which was inscribed the words "Or Glory". A red coat, faced with white, with an epaulette on each shoulder, buckskin breeches of a bright yellow, black knee boots, and spurs completed the costume. A long sword swung at his side, and a carbine was carried, muzzle down, in a socket at his stirrup. These troops were models of discipline and military splendor, and, mounted on handsome chargers, sixteen hands high, presented a most formidable appearance.

The 27th Foot, or Enniskillens, as it was called, was evidently an Irish battalion. The 44th was later known in England as the East Essex Regiment. The 64th Foot was a grenadier regiment, wearing high grenadier caps and red coats faced with black, whose similarity in dress to the German mercenaries may have occasioned the reports, nowhere substantiated by written evidence, that "Hessians" took part in the raid. Six pieces of the 4th Royal Artillery also accompanied the expedition.

Another organization, of which no mention is made in Tryon's orders, and which seems to have been in some degree an independent body, acting mainly under the orders of its colonel, also formed part of this expedition. This was the Prince of Wales' American Volunteers, a recently-recruited loyalist regiment, of especial interest to the readers of this volume, as it contained a considerable number of Redding Tories, and, indeed, was largely, if not entirely, composed of Fairfield County loyalists. Its commander was Montfort Browne, of whom it is known that he had been the royal governor of the Bahamas, had been taken prisoner at some early period of the war, and was exchanged for Major-General Lord Sterling, an American officer captured at the battle of Long

Island. Special inducements were offered to loyalists to join this corps, as shown by an advertisement in one of the royalist papers of New York, under date of March 3, 1777:

"The Royal and Hon. Brigade of the Prince of Wales Loyal Amer. Volunteers quartered at the famous and plentiful town of Flushing. Recruits taken also at Wm. Betts, sign of the Gen. Amherst, Jamaica. L5 bounty and 100 acres of land on the Mississippi, for 3 yrs. or during the rebellion. Present pay and free quarters. Clothing, arms and accouterments supplied."

This body was very popular with the loyalists, and, says one writer, "twenty in a drove would come from New England to enlist in Brown's corps."

By ten o'clock at night all were ashore, and the advance immediately began.

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## CHAPTER II.

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### THE ADVANCE ON DANBURY

The British, led by the Tories, took up their march towards Danbury. Grumman says their guide was Ephraim Deforest, a shoemaker and tanner of Redding, who espoused the cause of the King and fled to New York. He was appointed Ensign in Gov. Browne's Regiment, the Prince of Wales' American Volunteers. Barber says that the two who guided Tryon to Danbury were Stephen Jarvis and Eli Benedict, natives of the town. He also adds some interesting anecdotes of their careers.

We learn from another source that there were at Compo two families of tories, viz: one by the name of Lockwood and one by the name of Cable; it is said that Jabez Lockwood, one of the family, piloted them to Danbury; and it also said that Jabez Cable was pilot of the fleet to Cedar Point.

The invaders received their first check about three miles from the shore near the present Hawthorne Inn where Captain Disbrow, who had early enlisted in the war and was one of Washington's aides, during the fighting around New York, was home on furlough when he learned of the movements of Tryon. He gathered "The Gallant Seventeen", stationed them in a sheltered position, and as the British advanced in the moonlight they challenged with "Who goes there?" The answer was: "You will know soon." The Americans thereupon fired and a number of the enemy fell; the advancing column returned the fire, slightly wounding one American. The British secured an ox-cart and removed their dead and wounded to the vessels.

The enemy continued their route about a mile north of what is now the Post Road to the cross highway where they turned eastward until they came to the road which leads from Fairfield to Danbury and at a point described as being about five miles north of the court house and about a mile north of

Greenfield meeting house they turned north and took the road passing the present church at Aspetuck.

Anna Crossman, the wife of Elias Bennett of Northfield, who was anticipating an interesting family event was alarmed by the landing of the British and started for her mother's at Compo, on horseback. On Coley's Flats she met the troops who halted her but upon learning her condition allowed her to pass. The child was a daughter Abigail, through whom this story came down to Mrs. Arthur C. Bradley of Weston.

Somewhere in the then parish of Weston (presumed to be near the junction of Catamount Road and Danbury Road, two miles north of Greenfield Hill) the British bivouaced for the night and doubtless rested in perfect security. But a wave of terror preceded their advance and as the news that a large British force was actually advancing through the country was spread abroad by swift messengers the householders, panic-stricken, roused their families from slumber and sought safety in flight.

Tryon seems to have warred pre-eminently on women and boys as the latter "would very soon grow into rebels." The women of Redding had heard of this propensity and at his approach gathered all the boys of thirteen and under—the older ones were away under arms—and conveyed them to a secluded place near Valley Forge where they were left under the charge of one Gershom Barlow. Here they remained until the invader had regained his ships, provisions being cooked and sent in to them daily.

To right and left and far in advance of the British column, men loaded their household goods upon carts and wagons, and removed them, with their wives and children, to points of supposed security. The excitement must have been intense, and the efforts of citizens to insure the safety of their families and possessions doubtless added greatly to the difficulty of rallying troops for defense. Many of the inhabitants elected to remain where they were, trusting to fortune and the good will of their loyalist friends to insure them protection against violence.

Meantime, messengers had been sent in all directions, summoning the militia of the district to take up arms in defense of their homes. Generals Wooster and Arnold, at New Haven, receiving intelligence of the invasion, gathered a small escort and pushed westward, picking up various militia companies as they advanced. To the northward, also, the militia began to collect and close in upon the British line of march.

Charles Burr Todd in his "History of Redding" mentions the following incidents of the morning march—

On receiving intelligence of the landing at Compo, Captain Zalmon Read mustered his company of militia, and forthwith marched to intercept the invaders. At a place called Couch's Rock, in Weston, (perhaps Jump Hill) they came suddenly upon the entire force of the enemy and were taken prisoners. Timothy Parsons, one of the militiamen, had a fine musket which he particularly valued; this a grenadier took, and dashed to pieces on the stones, saying it should waste no more rebel bullets. In the possession of one of his descendants is an old account book in which he briefly relates his painful experience of capture and captivity in quaint phraseology and curious orthography. Mr. Grumman unearthed this jewel:

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I was taken By the Ragalor light  
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DanBary to Richfeald form thance  
A Bourd of the Chip to Coumpo  
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pout in prisen the fust Day of  
May than Capt Tial the 11 day  
of Joun oupon extremes Chart  
Lounance and underwent much—

Mrs. Thankful Bradley, living in Weston, near the Redding line, was milking by the roadside when the troops surprised her. An officer told her to remain quiet, and they would not molest her. She followed his advice and continued milking while the entire army filed by. With the exception of kidnapping the lad Sanford, the British behaved with praiseworthy moderation during their march through Redding. No

buildings were burned, and no such enormities committed as marked their descent on Fairfield and New Haven two years later.

Arrived at Redding Ridge, a halt of two hours was made for breakfast. The troops appear to have refrained from pillage and violence, but the loyalist soldiers, as they passed through the vicinity of their old homes, jeered their whig neighbors, and roundly abused them for not taking service in the cause of their king.

During the halt in Redding the main body of the troops remained under arms on the green in front of the church. Tryon, Agnew, and Erskine were invited into Esquire William Heron's who lived in the first house south of the church, no longer standing. Here they were hospitably entertained with cake and wine, and with many hopeful prognostications of the speedy collapse of the "rebellion". Directly across the street from the church, in a house still standing, lived Lieutenant Stephen Betts, a prominent patriot. It was at his house, it will be remembered, that the county convention was held in 1779, (when drastic steps against Tories were initiated). A file of soldiers entered the house, seized him, and he was taken with them on their march. James Rogers, another prominent patriot, and Jeremiah Sanford, a lad of ten years, son of Mr. Daniel Sanford, met a like fate. The lad, we may remark, was carried to New York and died in the prison ship, June 28th, 1777, although Betts and Rogers were released at Compo.

Shortly before the army resumed its march, a horseman was observed spurring rapidly down the Couch's Hill road toward them, and approached within musketshot before discovering their presence; he then turned to fly, but was shot and severely wounded in the attempt. He proved to be a messenger from Colonel Cook who commanded the garrison in Danbury, bearing dispatches to General Silliman, by name Lambertson Lockwood. Tryon had formerly known him in Norwalk, where Lockwood had rendered him a service, and seems to have acted on this occasion with some approach to magnanimity, as he

released him on parole, and allowed him to be taken into a house that his wounds might be dressed.

The statement (made by Hollister) concerning the firing into the church is a mistake, and Todd was assured that the reverse is true. It is said that the church was not molested at all (except that a soldier with a well-directed ball took off a leg from the gilded weathercock on the spire), and the fact that the pastor, the Rev. John Beach, as well as several of its most prominent members, were most pronounced loyalists, strengthens the assertion.

While Redding lost several inhabitants during Tryon's visit they gained at least one. "Uncle Barney" Keeler who later lived on Umpawaug Hill, took up residence at this time, the story being that he deserted from the British Grenadier Regiment.

The British Army, after halting an hour or two in the village, resumed its march to Danbury, and as they were ascending Hoyt's Hill on their entry into Bethel one of the inhabitants of the town, Mr. Luther Holcomb, rode his horse up to the summit in the face of the enemy and although entirely alone (judging from the words he used) intended to make an impression. Waving his hat or sword and turning his face as though he was addressing an army behind him, he exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "Halt! the whole Universe! Break off by Kingdoms!" This, it must be confessed, was a formidable force to encounter. The British army was halted, their cannon brought forward and every preparation made for an engagement when Mr. Holcomb wheeled about and made good his escape.

After leaving Bethel the ranks were deployed, and Danbury was approached in open order, some of the advance being so far deployed as to take in Shelter Rock Ridge on the right and Thomas Mountain on the left.

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## CHAPTER III.

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### THE OCCUPATION OF DANBURY

The defense of Danbury was entrusted mostly to the rugged terrain surrounding it and the town and supplies stored here were supposed to be safe. A militia company of about one hundred men under command of Col. Joseph P. Cooke existed in Danbury and there were some fifty Continentals here on their way to the Hudson when the attack came. Col. Jedediah Huntington, of Norwich, was the commanding officer of a militia regiment which had been ordered to rendezvous at Danbury and was here preparing for their reception. Dr. Foster, recently appointed Medical Director of the Department, was stationed here with a small and probably unarmed detachment from the 14th militia regiment to take charge of the hospital in the town and also the immense store of medical supplies most of which were removed to New Milford and thus saved from destruction.

The happenings during the brief stay of the British in Danbury are best told by Bailey in his "History of Danbury" and the account which follows in the next few chapters is based upon his narrative with some additions from other sources.

The enemy reached Danbury between two and three o'clock Saturday afternoon. The sky was clear and the sun shining brightly when they appeared, but a storm of rain began shortly after and prevailed through the night.

On reaching the south end of our village General Tryon took up his headquarters in the house of Nehemiah Dibble at the corner of Stone and South Streets. The same building was known as the Wooster place (from the fact of General Wooster dying there a few days later) until its destruction some years ago, and the site has since been marked by the D. A. R.

Soon after the retreat of the British troops, some fifteen or twenty young whigs walked into the house, lately occupied

by Tryon as his headquarters, in the evening, took the host, and carried him a short distance to Still River, and gave him what they called a thorough "ducking". They used him the greater part of the night, and in that time immersed him as frequently as they deemed profitable. He was ever afterwards a worthy citizen.

The leader having selected his headquarters, the quartering of the force for the protection of themselves was next attended to. Tryon's assistants, Generals Erskine and Agnew, accompanied by a body of infantry, proceeded up Main Street to the junction of the Barn Plain Road (now White Street), where Benjamin Knapp lived. His house stood where is now the Nichols brick block, long known as Military Hall. The two generals quartered themselves upon Mr. Knapp, taking complete possession of the house, with the exception of one room, where Mrs. Knapp was lying ill.

On this dash up Main Street the party met with two incidents. Silas Hamilton had a piece of cloth at a fuller's on South Street. It is said that Major Taylor was the fuller. When Hamilton heard of the approach of the enemy, he mounted his horse and rode off at full speed for his goods. He was rather late, however, and when he came out to remount his horse, a squad of the invading force was upon him. He flew up Main Street with a half dozen troopers in full pursuit, and on reaching West Street he turned into it, with the hair of his head very erect. The enemy's light horsemen followed hard after, exclaiming, "We'll have you, old daddy! we'll have you!" "Not yet!" replied the old gentleman. The light horsemen rode up and endeavored to cut him down, but the old gentleman's cloth began to unroll and fly out behind; this so frightened their horses, that they could not get within striking distance; they however chased him through nearly the whole extent of the street.

The column that came up Main Street were fired upon from the house of Captain Ezra Starr, which stood where the old High School is located at the corner of Main and Boughton Streets. The shots, it has been claimed, were fired by four

young men. It was an act of reckless daring, and the actors must have been very young, as the shots could have no other effect than to exasperate the invaders.

Dr. Robbins, in his account of the battle in his *Century Sermon*, says that one valuable house with four persons in it was burned, but does not say who the persons were. The men who fired on the enemy, from Captain Starr's house, were killed, and their bodies were burned in the building; but there were not four of them, there were three. One of these was a negro, named Adams. The two white men were Joshua Porter and Eleazer Starr. The former was a member of Noble Benedict's company, organized in 1775. He was great-grandfather of the late Colonel Samuel Gregory of this town, and lived in that part of the town that is called Westville District. He was in the village after a gallon of molasses when the enemy came.

Starr lived where now stands the News building. He and Porter went into Captain Starr's house to observe the coming of the British. Colonel Gregory stated that the negro was in the employ of Captain Starr. Depositions before the General Assembly, made in 1778, show that this Adams was a slave and belonged to Samuel Smith, in Redding. His service may have been leased to Captain Starr; at any rate, he died with Porter and Starr. A British officer, said to have been the Earl of Falkland's son, who was present at the time, subsequently spoke of the incident to a neighbor. He killed the negro himself.

As the British troops reached a point near the present location of the court-house their artillery was discharged and the heavy balls, six and twelve-pounders, flew screaming up the street, carrying terror to the hearts of the women and children, and dismay to the heads of the homes thus endangered.

Immediately upon Generals Agnew and Erskine taking up their quarters in Mr. Knapp's house, pickets were located. One squad of twenty men occupied the rising ground where is now the junction of Park Avenue and Pleasant Street. A second took position on Hull's Hill. The third took position out Franklin Street. We have no information of other picket

squads, but it is likely that every approach to the village was guarded.

It is related of a brother of Joshua Porter that, coming into the village to see what the British were doing, he encountered three of the picket stationed on Park Avenue. They commanded him to halt.

“What for?” he inquired, still continuing toward them.

“You are a prisoner,” said they.

“Guess not,” he laconically replied, moving steadily upon them.

“We’ll stick you through and through, if you don’t stop,” one of them threatened, advancing close to him.

This John Porter was a man of very powerful build, with muscles like steel, and a movement that was a very good substitute for lightning. They were close upon him. There was a gulch back of them. In a flash Porter had the foremost Red-coat in his grasp and in next instant he had hurled him against the other two, and the three went into the gulch in a demoralized heap. The rest of the squad, seeing the disaster, immediately surrounded and subdued Porter. This little affair, it is said, gave the name of Squabble Hill to that neighborhood.

Porter and a man named Barnum, and Benj. Sperry are believed to be the only prisoners the enemy carried away from Danbury. They were taken to New York City and confined in the infamous Sugar House prison. Porter was subsequently released and returned home, but Barnum died there from starvation. When found he had a piece of brick in his hand, holding it to his mouth, as if to draw moisture from it to cool his feverish throat.

The main body of the troops remained in the village and shortly engaged in the destruction of the military stores. Those in the Episcopal Church were rolled out into the street and there fired, as the edifice was of the Church of England, and so revered by the English invader.

Two other buildings contained stores. One of these was a barn belonging to Nehemiah Dibble. The goods were taken out and burned to save the building, as Dibble was a Tory.

The other was a building situated on Main Street, near the Samuel C. Wildman place. It was full of grain and was burned with its contents. It is said that the fat from the burning meat ran ankle-deep in the street. No less free ran the rum and wine, although not in the same direction! The soldiers who were directed to destroy these tested them first, and the result was as certain as death. Before night had fairly set in the greater part of the force were in a riotous state of drunkenness. Discipline was set at naught. King George stood no chance whatever in the presence of King Alcohol, and went down before him at once. The riot continued far into the night. Danbury was never before nor since so shaken.

The drunken men went up and down Main Street in squads, singing army songs, shouting coarse speeches, hugging each other, swearing, yelling, and otherwise conducting themselves as becomes an invader when he is very, very drunk.

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## CHAPTER IV

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### THE BURNING OF DANBURY

That night of April 26th, 1777, was not a particularly happy one for the general in command of the British forces. He had met with a complete success in reaching Danbury and destroying the stores, which was the object of his mission; but the great bulk of his force was helpless in the strong embrace of New England rum, and news had come that a force of the enemy was gathering and marching toward him. They were anxious hours to the three generals and their aides, but especially to him on whom rested all the responsibility of the expedition.

Besides the approach of Wooster's men there was the small band of troops under command of Colonel Cooke, who were undoubtedly near by, ready to give vigorous help to an attacking force, knowing every foot of the ground, and capable of giving an infinite amount of annoyance, if nothing more. Then there were gathering farmers from the outlying districts, who had through the afternoon given substantial evidence of their presence by creeping up as near as possible and firing at the pickets. The darkness that fell about the town after night-fall might pardonably be peopled with many dangers by even a less imaginative person than was the British general.

In the meantime Benjamin Knapp, the erstwhile tanner and now unwilling host, was having his own particular trouble. It is very rarely that a resident of a humble village has two brigadier-generals come to spend Sunday with him, and the advent of Generals Agnew and Erskine should have been an unbounded delight to Mr. Knapp, but it is doubtful if it were.

The generals made themselves fully at home. There was no stiffness about them. They killed Mr. Knapp's stock, and cut up the meat on his floor, and the dents thereof were visible as long as the building stood. Mr. Knapp's wife was a sorely

afflicted invalid, but her inability to attend to domestic duties did not in any way embarrass the guests, yet it was very unpleasant for Mr. Knapp. Besides that, the neighboring people, on that eventful afternoon, drew near to the town with their long-barrelled guns, and taking advantage of the heavy growth of alders along Still River, fired at a redcoat wherever he showed himself. There was a guard stationed on the Main Street Bridge, and this party was a special target. All this made Mr. Knapp very nervous, as he could not very satisfactorily show that he was not in league with the ambushed patriots, and he feared his property would suffer.

However, it did not. The British generals, in view of their accommodation and the illness of Mrs. Knapp, spared the house in the general conflagration that followed. The house was removed about 1865 to make room for the present building.

At midnight the uproar caused by the inundation of two thousand soldiers, and the absorption of such a great quantity of New England rum, had to a great degree abated. Tryon was fully awake for his position was becoming exceedingly perilous. Shortly after midnight word came to him that the rebels under Wooster and Arnold had reached Bethel, and were preparing to attack him. This was unexpected to him. He had thought to spend the Sabbath leisurely in Danbury but the word that came from Bethel radically changed his programme. At once all became bustle. The drunken sleepers were aroused to new life by the most available means, and a movement made toward immediate evacuation.

It was nearly one o'clock Sunday morning when Tryon got word of the Bethel gathering. Up to that hour there had been but three buildings destroyed (already mentioned). As soon as the men were aroused and in place, excepting those detailed for picket, the work of destruction began. This was about two o'clock. In the next hour the buildings owned by Tories were marked with a cross, done with a chunk of lime and the work of burning was then commenced.

The first house burned stood just west of the Episcopal Church on South Street, but some little distance from the

street. There was a long garden attached to it, and at the opposite end of the garden, almost reaching Main Street, was another house.

It is not known who lived in either of these, but they may have been Jonah and Matthew Benedict, who lost property in the fire, and who are supposed to have lived on South Street. Captain Daniel Taylor, Major Taylor, Comfort Hoyt, Jr., and Joseph Wildman were also among the sufferers. The second house fired was on the east side of Main Street, a few rods from the corner of South Street, and where the big pine-tree used to stand.

After that there was no order in the firing, but the flames seemed to burst out simultaneously in all directions. The house of Major Taylor stood on the southwest corner of what are now South and Mountainville Streets, and was the last house fired by the British as they left town. An old lady afterward said that if she had not been so frightened, she could have put out the newly kindled fire with a pail of water.

Dr. John Wood's house, which stood where was the homestead of the late Philander Comstock, was destroyed. There were two wells in this vicinity, each of which was filled with iron, cannon-balls, etc., that could not be burned.

On the opposite side of the street the house of Captain John Clark was burned. Next was the house of Major Mygatt, which was burned, as was also the residence of Rev. Ebenezer White, near the court-house.

Zadock Benedict's house stood just north of the Post office. Mr. Knapp must have thought the trouble was getting pretty close to him. Captain Joseph P. Cooke also lost his house, which stood on the site of the residence of the late Mr. Lucious P. Hoyt.

In Sir William Howe's official report of the foray he states that "in the destruction of the stores at Danbury the village was unavoidably burnt." The list of material destroyed was as follows: a quantity of ordnance stores, with iron, etc.; 4000 barrels of beef and pork; 100 large tierces of biscuits; 89 barrels of rice; 120 puncheons of rum; several large stores of

wheat, oats and Indian corn, in bulk, the quantity hereof could not possibly be ascertained; 30 pipes of wine; 100 hogsheads of sugar; 50 ditto of molasses; 20 casks of coffee; 15 large casks filled with medicines of all kinds; 10 barrels of saltpeter; 1020 tents and marquees; a number of iron boilers; a large quantity of hospital bedding; engineers', pioneers' and carpenters' tools; a printing press complete; tar; tallow, etc.; 5000 pairs of shoes and stockings.

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## CHAPTER V

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### THE EVACUATION OF DANBURY

Tryon's forces were landed Friday evening, and not until midnight was his objective point known to the patriots. Before the dawn of the new day swift messengers, as the riders to Lexington, or those who summoned Clan Alpine to the fight, were speeding far over the hills and valleys, calling on all to resist the foe.

To those interested in a very pleasing account of how one Philip Lester carried the warning from his home in Saugatuck to Ridgefield by way of Canaan Parish we suggest "The Alarm", a booklet written by Mrs. Emma W. Law Demeritt of New Canaan. Frank Samuel Child's story "The Unknown Patriot" is also of interest in this connection.

The names of many who bore on the warning may never be known, but history tells us that General Silliman, who was at his residence at Fairfield, immediately sent out his expresses to alarm the country, and collect the militia. The call met with such a loyal response that early on Saturday morning the General was on his way toward Redding with five hundred men, for, says a foot note, "the people of this region were very patriotic and never hesitated a moment when their country called".

A swift rider bore the tidings to Sharon that the British were burning Danbury. The church bells were rung all that night, and in the dusk of the early morning, one hundred men were marching rapidly down the Housatonic Valley, to the assistance of their fellow patriots.

Meanwhile the patriots in Redding anxiously waited the approach of the Continental army in pursuit. At length it came in view marching wearily with dusty and disordered ranks, a little army of five hundred men and boys led by Brigadier General Silliman in person. They had marched from Fairfield that day and were many hours behind the foe

who was then lying drunken and disorganized at Danbury. A muster roll of the little band would have shown a most pathetic exhibition of weakness. There were parts of the companies of Colonel Lamb's battalion of artillery with three rusty cannon, a field piece and part of the artillery company of Fairfield and sixty Continentals; the rest were raw levies, chiefly old men and boys. It was eight o'clock in the evening when the troops arrived at Redding Ridge, an evening as disagreeable as a northeast rainstorm with its attendant darkness could make it. Here the troops halted an hour for rest and refreshment. Then a bugle sounded far down the street, the tramp of horsemen was heard and presently Major-General Wooster and Brigadier-General Benedict Arnold at the head of a squadron of horsemen dashed into the village. On hearing that the British were so far ahead it is said that Arnold became so enraged that he could scarcely keep his saddle and his terrible oaths fell on his auditors' ears like thunder claps. Wooster at once assumed command and the column moved forward through the darkness and mud to Bethel where they halted and were billeted for the night. Only three miles away Tryon's force was sleeping in drunken security and might have been annihilated by a determined effort, but the pursuers were too exhausted to make the attempt.

We now insert material largely prepared by George L. Rockwell of Ridgefield, whose extensive knowledge gained from written accounts of the events which follow has been reinforced by much original material, the result of painstaking research and reproduced here through his courtesy. Those interested in greater detail of the running fight through Ridgefield, are referred to his recent "History of Ridgefield".

Thinking to mislead General Wooster, Tryon took up the line of march toward Ridgefield, a detour being made through Ridgebury. Before sunrise the last of the British were leaving Danbury, the main line of march being out the present Wooster Street to Miry Brook, and thence to Ridgebury. A portion of the troops passed out by way of South Street and the upper end of Mountainville Avenue then over Hull's Hill.

At Miry Brook several patriots had removed the bridge from over Wolf Pond Run. It is said that the cannon of the British became mired, and the name Miry Brook was given to this stream because of the incident. The British were obliged to make a temporary bridge of rails in order to get the cannon across.

Straggling but determined rebels, armed with long muskets, carried with both hands, were bringing up the rear, doing their level best to harass the foe, and succeeding. Still with all their patriotic zeal we are obliged to entertain but a poor idea of their marksmanship, for there is no record that any of the enemy were killed on Danbury soil. Among this crowd of daring, if not effective, persons there was one who was sufficiently rapid in his manual of arms, however short he may have fallen from being effective. He was poised on a fence the afternoon before and fired thirty-two shots at the skirmish line of the advancing British without being touched by a single one of the many bullets sent after him. When his ammunition was gone he held up his cartridge box to the enemy to show its emptiness and then left, shouting as he ran these very patriotic words:

"He that fights and runs a way  
May live to fight another day,  
But he that is in battle slain  
Shall never live to fight again."

From Miry Brook the troops marched directly to Ridgebury. Most of the people fled through the rain that was then falling to the high hill about a mile and one-half northwest of the present Congregational church from which position they could distinctly see the Regulars, as they were termed, pass through the village.

From old residents it has been definitely ascertained that only a part of the troops passed through Ridgebury Street, while another portion turned off at the foot of the second long hill just east of the church, and proceeded to the south through that section of Ridgebury known as Bogus. There was a well defined road at that time, and some of their artillery went by this route. Today this highway of the Revolution is but a

wood road, but plainly seen and may be followed. At the corner of Ridgebury Street a young girl looked out upon the British troops from an upstairs window in the house of Captain Timothy Benedict, as they were passing by. She ducked her head just in time to escape being struck by a shower of bullets. The British forces after arriving at Ridgebury Street turned south and proceeded toward Ridgefield Village through the gap in the ledges into Scotland District when they halted upon the flat near the school house for breakfast. Out-flanking parties kept to the west of the main army in Ridgebury passing near South Ridgebury school house and through Spring Valley, joining the remainder of the troops where they had halted. This last detachment burned a mill belonging to Isaac Keeler which stood near the North Salem road on the outlet of Lake Mamasasco. A considerable quantity of corn which was stored in this mill was also burned and the British killed several cattle belonging to neighboring farmers for their breakfast.

Within an hour after Tryon's rear guard had cleared Ridgebury corner, Wooster with a force of two hundred men hurried over Barlow Mountain in hot pursuit. In his first charge Wooster appeared with his forces from out of a piece of woods, evidently those along the Titicus River just east of the place where the British halted for breakfast. Wooster fell upon them with such surprise that he captured forty men, besides inflicting other losses. After the first attack Wooster withdrew with his prisoners and waited until the British army was again on the march before he made a second dash upon them. The second attack was made about two miles above Ridgefield Village, and here the brave general received his death wound. A small tablet marks the spot where he fell and the place is well known to the traveler. This tablet was erected by Mr. Edward A. Housman of Danbury, on July 4th, 1896. At this point the enemy was hidden by the hill to the west and south and when Wooster made this second charge, he fell fiercely upon the rear of the British, and almost at the beginning of the attack received his mortal wound. His career is fully covered in our Chapter VIII.

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## CHAPTER VI

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### THE BATTLE OF RIDGEFIELD

While Wooster set off in an attempt to overtake the retreating British column Arnold and Silliman were hastening across country from Bethel in hopes of cutting them off from the ships. By the time they arrived in Ridgefield more militia had flocked to Arnold's standard, proud of his fame as the bravest man that ever drew breath and eager to fight under a leader equally audacious and successful. It is said that more than five hundred men were under him at Ridgefield.

At the upper end of the Main Street of this pretty little village a barricade of stone and logs was erected across the road extending from the old Stebbins house to the ledge of rocks on the other side. The road was very narrow at that point and very much higher than it is at present besides being well flanked by ground that was difficult from a military point of view. There was no house on the west side of the street.

When Wooster was shot his men fell back in disorder but were rallied by his aide Capt. Stephen Rowe Bradley, who withdrew them from further pursuit and organized them to go forward and join Arnold. The pressure upon the rear being relieved Tryon's troops advanced to reduce the resistance in front.

At about noon the British advancing in three columns came into sight. As soon as General Tryon discovered the barricade he halted, and ordered General Agnew to advance with the main body of his troops in solid column. Detachments were also sent out to flank the Americans and fall upon their rear. Several times the Americans poured a deadly fire upon the advancing foe. The engagement lasted about a quarter of an hour. The flanking parties must have extended for some distance as Colonel Gould of Fairfield was shot about a quarter of a mile east of the Stebbins home. The stretch of

land just north of the present residence of Dr. R. W. Lowe was at that time, a wet marshy piece of ground, and served as a natural protection upon that side. Being unable to dislodge the Americans at the front, General Agnew was ordered to make an attack on the left flank. With a regiment he succeeded in climbing the ledge, thus gaining a decided point of advantage but a whole platoon of soldiers who had succeeded in reaching the summit of the rocks in advance of the regiment, fired upon General Arnold at a distance of less than thirty yards. He was untouched, but his horse fell beneath him, struck by nine balls. This fact was ascertained from a farmer who skinned the horse the next day.

While struggling to release his feet from the stirrups, a tory named Coon from New Fairfield, or as some say Milford, advanced towards him, for the purpose of making him a prisoner, and said to him, "Surrender! you are my prisoner." "Not yet," said Arnold, who at that moment, having extricated himself from his fallen horse, drew a pistol from his holster, and shot his adversary dead upon the spot. He escaped to a nearby swamp and is said to have remarked as he coolly regained cover and looked to his pistol that "One live man was worth more than ten dead ones!"

Grumman says in his account of the battle that Ebenezer Patchen of Redding was reputed to have saved the life of General Arnold by presenting his musket at the breast of a British soldier about to fire at the General.

Lieut-Col. Abraham Gould of Fairfield commanding the Fourth Connecticut Militia was killed on horseback a considerable distance east of the Stebbins House, his sword wet with the blood of the enemy. Later in the day a funeral party moved southward from the battle field escorting the lifeless body of Gould secured upon the back of the faithful charger that had borne him through the heat of the battle. Eight Americans and sixteen British soldiers were buried in a small field on the right of the American position but there are also single graves of the combatants at many points along the line of march. Those who died at the Ridgefield barricade were

buried nearby and a marker placed in the stone wall at the roadside marks the spot today. We are indebted to Miss Olcott for this enduring monument.

The wounded were taken into the Stebbins house to be given treatment and on the oaken floors could be seen the stains of blood at the time the house was torn down. The house itself was a standing monument to the battle as the path of more than one cannon ball could be traced in it.

The Stebbins house was not destroyed by the British. Benjamin Stebbins, the owner, was an old man at the time, and was in the house during the battle. His son Josiah was a Tory and accompanied the British on their march from Danbury. This probably is the explanation of why the house was spared from the British torch. The battle in Ridgefield did not stop at the Stebbins place. After the unhorsing of General Arnold, which was about the same time that the barricade was forced, the American troops were ordered to withdraw. A scattering fire was kept up through the street and along East Ridge all day. The British placed a cannon in front of the Episcopal church which stood near the site of the present edifice, and several shots were fired down the street. One of these balls lodged in the Keeler Tavern where it has been viewed by many thousands of people, from the day of the battle until the present time, as it still remains lodged in the oak post near the northeast corner of the house.

The home of Timothy Keeler, afterward the famous Reseguie Hotel, was another target for the artillery of the British and was marked for destruction by fire. But nearby stood the residence of a loyalist and it is said that through the interposition of this individual with General Tryon that the house was spared, the reason therefore being attributed to purely selfish motives. The wind was blowing strongly from the north west which would have endangered the Tory's house.

As the story goes Mr. Keeler's house was actually fired but Hoyt and Tory obtained permission to and assistance in subduing the flames. After the enemy had left and Mr. Keeler had returned from the woods where he had sought safety Hoyt

greeted him with the exclamation "You may thank me that your house was not destroyed." "No sir" replied Keeler, "I will not thank a Tory for anything, I would rather thank the Lord for the north wind!"

That night the British camped just below the village street upon what was afterwards the old Fair Grounds property. They had burned several houses, and in the morning before their departure set fire to the Episcopal church in which stores for the army had been placed and which had been a hospital overnight. The church was only partially burned.

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## CHAPTER VII

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### THE RETREAT TO THE SHIPS

The situation of Tryon's force was now becoming critical. From all sides the militia of Fairfield, New Haven, Litchfield, and Westchester counties was closing in upon him; his losses had been considerable; he was encumbered with prisoners; his troops were becoming exhausted with the strain of conflict, and his ammunition was running low. Absolute rest was not permitted to his men—there was firing during the night. On the morning of the 28th the British resumed their march, constantly harassed by a running fire as they moved doggedly onward toward the landing-place. This was a medicine that the British never took kindly to. To pour heavy volleys in the direction of the enemy and to receive the same in return was the mode of fighting to which he had been trained. But to be constantly peppered by antagonists who took advantage of every rock, tree, or other bit of cover, and whose bullets were aimed with uncomfortable precision, was disconcerting even to Britain's bravest defenders. The retreat to the ships was a repetition of that from Lexington two years before.

From Mrs. Marian Olmstead's "Wilton Parish" we are enabled to insert a few interesting paragraphs regarding the retreat through a section of what was then the Township of Norwalk.

In the morning they proceeded to Wilton over Bald Hill, crossed from the Ridgefield road, where the Congregational church now stands, to the Danbury road, about one-half mile north of St. Matthew's Church, and here they halted, where they took breakfast and then resumed their march, at about 9 o'clock in the forenoon. Near this place where they had halted for breakfast some of them entered Mr. Belden's store, in which was deposited a quantity of merchandise belonging to a gentleman from New York, which they began to destroy,

but on being informed by Mr. Belden that the merchandise was private property, they desisted from doing any further harm to the same. At the next neighbor's barn they found Continental stores, which they set on fire, and proceeded immediately on their march to the main army. But very soon after they left the barn Mrs. Belden with her sister, Miss Lampson, went thither and extinguished the fire. The flank guard on passing through a field near by found a number of hogsheads of rum belonging to the Continental army, which they destroyed with all possible dispatch. Here the British were fired upon by some militia and one British soldier was wounded. On their march thence in passing through the eastern part of Wilton they fired upon the Americans and wounded three men.

Wilton Parish, as well as Norwalk, had the reputation of having many Tory sympathizers residing within the limits. While in these days much allowance is made for those who then conscientiously remained loyal to King George and the established church of England, we can realize what very detestable neighbors they must have been, when they carried secret information to the enemy, involving loss of life, property and defeat of the patriots, and leading Tryon's forces into their native towns to their destruction. Sometimes the suspected Tory was himself put in jeopardy. One prominent Wilton man was imprisoned on suspicion, a guard of his own townsmen put over him and his young cattle taken to sustain the needy army. For protection, he obtained a safe conduct from the American Colonel to enable him to return safely to his home. It was a common belief that the leaden statue of King George the Third in Bowling Green, N. Y., broken down by the "Sons of Liberty," was taken to Litchfield, Conn., to be melted into bullets to greet the soldiers of King George. But in some mysterious way, parts of it were taken secretly and buried in the soil of Wilton to be preserved, and in the peaceful years long after, the spade and the plow brought them into the light. Besides some small fragments found in the cellar of an old Tory house when it was torn down, in the garden close by, and in making

a ditch near the Episcopal church, about four hundred and twenty-five pounds were found, including parts of the saddle and tail now deposited with the New York Historical Society.

As the red coats approached the shore, they learned that greater speed and more fighting would be required if they were to sail on the outgoing tide. Colonel Huntington with five hundred men, Colonel Oswald with two companies of Lamb's artillery and four field pieces, an artillery company from Fairfield with one gun, sixty Continental troopers and three companies of volunteers from New Haven, came to the aid of Generals Arnold and Silliman.

Our people had proposed to give battle on the West side of Saugatuck river, on Old Hill, so called, which position commanded the bridge across the river, and the only place it was supposed they would attempt to cross. The colonists had quite a force there with a number of field pieces, with Arnold at their head. The British ascertained the position of our troops, when they were within about a mile of them, and instead of persisting in gaining the bridge to cross the river, which position our people had the complete command of, they filed off to the North up the river about one mile, piloted it is said by a man by the name of John French, a tory; when they forded the river and passed down on the East side, and got two field pieces on Couch Hill opposite.

The enemy hard pressed in the retreat, pushed for Compo Hill, and having gained that favorable position for defense, they brought their artillery to the front and made a stand. Large bodies of sailors and marines were put in motion for the shore, and by means of these re-inforcements, the harassed troops were enabled to embark, while with fresh men, the British made good their position, notwithstanding every effort that was made to dislodge them.

Colonel Lamb who had galloped in from Southington after a ride of sixty miles, led the troops in the charge on Compo Hill. From an old book the following description of the battle was taken: "Four field pieces on the enemy's right, within an enclosure of stone fences exceedingly annoyed the provincials

where Lamb was engaged. Leaping from his horse he proposed to carry them by storm. The troops readily assented, advanced bravely, receiving unterrified the grape shot which was plentifully showered around them. Lamb encouraged them onward, and they advanced to the fence with great resolution; as Lamb mounted the fence he was struck with a grape shot, and fell, both armies supposing him to be mortally wounded. The patriots unable to capture the guns, kept up a galling fire on the main body of the enemy as they retreated to their boats."

As Colonel Lamb was brought into the hospital the surgeon was preparing to operate upon a young militiaman whose hand and wrist were badly lacerated by a musket shot. As he was baring his arm for the occasion, a British soldier, shot through the body, was brought into the apartment. Seeing the desperate condition of the wounded man, who appeared to be in great agony, the youth, pointing to the sufferer, exclaimed to the surgeon: "That fellow wants your service more than I do;" and proceeded to replace the handkerchief, with which he had staunched the blood of his crippled limb. He waited while the surgeon was examining the soldier, who was mortally wounded and died in a few minutes; and then removing the bandage from his mangled arm, submitted to the amputation. The name of this noble and resolute fellow was Jacob Travis.

Lamb was not the only officer who displayed great gallantry in the closing hours of the battle. Arnold pressed on with every available man to cut off Tryon from his boats; so fiercely did the patriots assail the British, the ground was strewn with the wounded and dying. Arnold escaped unhurt, but his horse was shot, and a ball passed through the collar of his coat. The patriots continued the struggle until the last ship weighed anchor and passed out to sea.

Trevelyan the British author of a splendid work on the "American Revolution" furnished us with a summary of the adventure in the following paragraphs.

"The affair was a desultory and isolated raid, aiming at no solid military advantage; foredoomed to disaster; and quite

exceptionally irritating to the population of the locality. It was Lexington over again, in every particular, except that at Lexington the Royal forces had been commanded by a man of honor. The "fiery cross" had been sent far and wide through Connecticut; but it was not kindled by American hands. That conflagration of private dwellings which took place in the town of Danbury excited, and may almost be said to have maddened, the whole population of the province.

"We thought to fire but farm-steeds. We have lit  
A flame less transient in the hearts of men."

So the agents who carried out Governor Tryon's vindictive behests might with good reason have boasted; for they proved themselves the most effective recruiting officers in the service of Congress. Three thousand citizens of the outraged State soon marched to swell the Army of Reserve which was stationed under General Putnam at Peekskill in the central Highlands; and a battalion of infantry was told off to reinforce the garrison of Providence, in order that the enlightened and prosperous little capital of Rhode Island might be safe from the destruction which overtook so many other sea-side towns and villages. Considerable numbers of the Connecticut militia had repaired to the aid of Colonel Stark at Bennington; and some among them arrived in time for the battle. And yet, after listening favourably to requests for support from so many quarters, Jonathan Trumbull was not deaf to the cry of distress which reached him from beyond the Hudson River. The old Puritan gentleman assured General Schuyler that he should not be forsaken in his day of peril; and he carried with him the public opinion of the province which he administered. The Committeemen of the County of Albany had put forth an importunate, but not undignified, invocation to the sympathies of Connecticut. They recalled the circumstances that when New England was in danger, the State of New York had come forward spontaneously to the rescue. "Our Country," they wrote, "is now invaded; but where are our Eastern friends? What have we done to forfeit their esteem?" When that letter was

received at Litchfield,—the nearest large town in Connecticut to the seat of war,—the local Committee was called together, and an answer transmitted by return post. There was no time to correct the spelling, and possibly no sense of any need that such correction was required; but the rarest literary skill could not have added force or clearness to the unhesitating and unconditional pledge, which the reply contained, that, come what might, the States of New York and Connecticut should stand or fall together. Those were not empty words. General Schuyler had asked Governor Trumbull for a thousand troops. The response came in the shape of two hundred cavalry, and two strong, well-officered regiments of musketeers; and, before many weeks were out, the Connecticut militia had done their duty bravely in that furious and equal battle of Stillwater on the nineteenth of September which tested the relative fighting quality of Englishmen and Americans as it never had been tested before, and as, by the mercy of God, it will never in the future be tested again.”

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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### THE CAREER OF DAVID WOOSTER

Poor Wooster! He little realized when he started for our insignificant hamlet that it would become his everlasting home so far as this world was concerned, and that here the only substantial honor he should ever receive would be given.

The British had six pieces of artillery, three in front and three guarding the rear. The screaming of the grape-shot and whistling of the balls frightened the militia men and they hesitated in charging. Wooster endeavored to rally them, and turning in his saddle shouted, "Come on, my boys, never mind such random shots!" While leading his men and before he had time to turn his face toward the enemy after his exhortation, he was struck by the fatal musket ball. He fell from his horse and his sash was stripped from him and used to bear him from the field of battle. The British were evidently retreating towards Ridgefield Village, or else the body of Wooster would not have been recovered. The brave general was carried back a half mile over the line of march just passed by his foes and laid upon a large flat rock on the westerly side of the road, a familiar land-mark before the state road was put in. Dr. Turner, a surgeon with the militia, dressed his wounds and the general was then placed in a carriage and taken back to Danbury.

In the Dibble mansion, where Tryon but a few hours before had had his headquarters, the unfortunate general was placed. The army surgeon had dressed the wound as well as he was able, and shortly after a more experienced man came from New Haven to attend him.

The bullet, which is said to have been fired by a Tory, entered his back obliquely, just as he turned to wave on his men, and cutting the spinal cord, was buried in his stomach. The

nature of the wound precluded recovery even had he received the best skill on the moment.

His wife arrived from New Haven, but a delirium had seized him, and he did not recognize her. For three days he lay in the old South Street house, suffering untold agony, and then he fell into a stupor. This was Thursday morning of that eventful week.

It was noted by her, who, faithful to the last unremittingly watched his pillow, that during this and the following day (as is frequently the case in the closing scene of an active life) his mind was busied in exciting reminiscence. By the feeble light of flickering reason he was tracing the long and weary pilgrimage, the cruises, sieges, battles, marches through which he had passed, only to reach his grave. The home of his childhood, the cabin of his ship, the old mansion by the Sound, pass in a blended image before his fading vision. The dash of waves, the rattle of musketry, the roar of cannon, ring confusedly in his deafened ear. His hand cannot respond to the gentle pressure of affection. His breathing grows shorter and shorter, while the icy chill advances nearer and nearer to the heart. As his wife wipes the death damp from his brow, his eyes, hitherto closed, open once more, and in their clear depths, for one glad moment, she discovers the dear, the old, the familiar expression of returned consciousness; his lips gasp in vain to utter one precious word of final adieu, and the last effort is to throw on her one farewell glance of unutterable tenderness and love.

On Friday, May 2d, 1777, he died. On Sunday the funeral was held. It was a quiet affair, although the body was that of a major-general and of a soldier who for courage and patriotism had no superior. But Danbury was sorely afflicted. Many of the houses were in ruins, and nearly all the able-bodied men were away.

Miss Betty Porter, aged sixteen, daughter of one of the men killed and burned in Major Starr's house, and subsequently the wife of Captain Nathaniel Gregory, grandfather of the late

Colonel Gregory, was at the funeral. She says there were but six men present, and they bore the body to its resting-place.

The remains were interred in the graveyard on Wooster Street, where he was buried according to a statement in Barber at the distance of twenty feet in a northeast course from the grave of Mr. Sandemann.

We quote below his obituary as reproduced in Barber's "Historical Collections of Connecticut".

Major General Wooster was born in Huntington, (then Stratford) in this state, on the 2d of March, A. D. 1710-11 and was educated at Yale College, where he was graduated in the year 1738. Soon after the Spanish War broke out in 1793, he was employed, first as a lieutenant, and then as captain, of the armed vessel built by this colony for a Guarda Coasta. After this, he engaged in the military service of this country, and was a captain in Col. Burr's regiment, in the expedition against Louisburg, in 1745. After the reduction of that place, he was sent to France, with a part of the prisoners taken there, and from thence went to England where he received the honor of a captaincy in the regular establishment, in Sir William Pepperell's regiment. During the peace which soon followed, he received his half pay, and was chiefly employed in his private affairs. When the war with France was renewed in 1775, he was soon thought of as a gentleman qualified for a higher sphere of command, and served his country as colonel, and commander of a brigade to the end of the war.

From the first rise of the controversy with Great Britain in 1764, though his interest as a half pay officer might have apologized for him, if he had observed a perfect neutrality, yet so fully convinced was he of the ruinous measures of the British court, and so jealous was he of his country's rights, that regardless of his private interests, he took an open and decisive part, and avowedly espoused the cause of America, and persisted in that line of conduct till the day of his death. As soon as hostilities were commenced in the Lexington battle, the General Assembly of this colony set about raising an army, and Col. Wooster, from his approved abilities, well known courage and great experience, was appointed to the chief command. The same summer he was appointed a brigadier general in the continental service. Honored with these commissions, he first commanded

the troops sent to guard New York, where it was expected that a part of the British army which came over in 1775 would land. In the latter part of that campaign, he, with his troops, went into Canada, and assisted much in the reduction of St. Johns, Montreal, &c., and after Gen. Montgomery's death, had the chief command in that province. He returned home in the summer of 1776, and not long after was appointed first major general of the militia of this state. He had been out the whole of the last winter, at the head of a body of men raised by this state for its own security, and was but lately returned, when on Saturday, the 26th ult., he received the news that the enemy, in a large body, had landed at Compo. He immediately set off for Fairfield, leaving orders for the militia to be mustered and sent forward as fast as possible. When he arrived at Fairfield, finding Gen. Silliman had marched in pursuit of the enemy with the troops then collected, he followed on with all expedition, and at Reading overtook Gen. Silliman, with the small body of militia with him, of which he of course took the command, and proceeded that same evening to the village of Bethel. Here it was determined to divide the troops, and part were sent off under Generals Arnold and Silliman, the rest remained with General Wooster; and then he led by the route of Danbury in pursuit, of the enemy, whom he overtook on the Sabbath, about 11 o'clock, near Ridgefield. Observing a part of the enemy who seemed to be detached from the main body, he determined to attack them, though the number of his men was less than two hundred; he accordingly led them on himself with great spirit and resolution, ordering them to follow him. But being unexperienced militia, and the enemy having several field pieces, our men, after doing considerable execution, were broken and gave way. The General was rallying them to renew the attack, when he received the fatal wound. A musket ball, from the distance of fifty rods, took him obliquely in the back, broke his back bone, lodged within him, and never could be found. He was removed from the field, had his wound dressed by Dr. Turner, and was then conveyed back to Danbury, where all possible care was taken of him. The surgeons were from the first sensible of the danger of the case, and informed the General of their apprehensions, which he heard with the greatest composure.

The danger soon became more apparent; his whole lower parts became insensible, and a mortification, it is thought,

began very early. However, he lived till Friday, the 2d of May, and then, with great composure and resignation, expired. It was designed to bring his remains to New Haven, to be interred there, but this was found impossible, and therefore they were interred at Danbury.

On April 27th, 1852, the remains of the hero were taken from the Wooster Street burial-ground, and deposited in Wooster Cemetery, beneath the imposing monument there placed to his memory upon which we may read the following epitaph:

Brother DAVID WOOSTER,

Impressed while a stranger in a foreign land, with the necessity of some tie that should unite all mankind in a UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD, he returned to his native country, and procured from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts a Charter, and first introduced into Conn. that light which has warmed the widow's heart, and illumined the orphan's pathway. Under the Charter of 1750, Hiram Lodge No. 1, of New Haven, was organized, of which he was first Worshipful Master. Grateful for his services as the Master Builder of the oldest Temple, for his fidelity as a Brother, and his renown as a patriot and soldier, the Free and Accepted Masons have united with his native State and the citizens of Danbury, in rearing and consecrating this Monument to his memory. Erected at Danbury, A. L. 5854, A. D. 1854.

DAVID CLARK, Grand Master.

History tells us that ten thousand attended the dedication of the monument. Among them were Governor Charles H. Pond, Ex-Governor Chauncey F. Cleveland, Mrs. Lydia Huntley Sigourney, the poetess; Judge Thomas B. Butler of Norwalk, and Henry Champion Deming of Hartford, who was the orator of the day.

“The late Ex-Governor George E. Lounsbury of Ridgefield was among those who attended the dedication of the monument. A few years after this occasion, he was a teacher in Jackson's Boarding School, afterwards the Turner House, and now the Knights of Columbus Home. He often spoke of a conversation that he had at this time with one of the old resi-

dents of Danbury. Historians have told us that when the disinterment of the remains of Wooster was about to take place, that there was some question as to the exact location of his grave. Governor Lounsbury said that an old negro, who as a young man was present at the time of the burial, pointed out the place. Upon opening the grave there were found metal portions of the uniform, also a bullet, which confirmed the evidence presented by the old colored man.”—(Rockwell).

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## CHAPTER IX

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### THE AFTERMATH

Long before the royal column passed Ridgebury church the people who had fled began to return to the village, some to undisturbed homes, others to smoking ruins. Before night the most of them were here, although it was not until the next day that all had returned.

With the returning Danburians came a host of sightseers from Redding, Bethel, Brookfield, Newtown, New Fairfield, and other places. It was a great spectacle for outsiders, and they flocked here just as people do to the scene of an automobile accident.

All that Sunday afternoon Main and South Streets were full of people viewing the ruins, sympathizing with the sufferers, cursing the enemy, and delivering opinions of reckless wisdom, as is common with the dear masses in matters they know nothing of. One of these visitors used to relate that the wheels of his wagon sank above their felloes in the cold grease on South Street, which came from the burnt pork. There were three taverns here at the time, and the business they might have done, had they the liquid facilities, would have been immense.

A committee which consisted of Daniel Sherman, Increase Moseley, Nehemiah Beardsley and Lemuel Sanford, were appointed by the General Assembly in May, 1777, on petition of the selectmen of Danbury, to estimate the damages sustained by the inhabitants of said town, by the incursion of the British troops. The committee were appointed to estimate the damage and loss of each sufferer in said town, occasioned by the British, and make their report of the same to the Assembly, that the actual losses should be distinctly known, and subject to the acts of some future Legislature. The committee repaired to Danbury on the 3rd day of June, 1777, after hav-

ing notified the inhabitants, and from day to day examined the losses of each sufferer on oath, and by other evidence, and allowed to each his damage at the time said property was destroyed; they found that by reason of the price of articles, the inhabitants had been obliged to pay large sums over and above the value, in procuring necessaries for their families; that many of them had their teams forced from them, to remove the public stores, etc. The committee reported to the Assembly the name of each sufferer with his loss allowed, annexed to his name, as follows:

“Nineteen dwelling houses, the meeting house of the New Danbury Society, and twenty-two stores and barns, with all their contents were consumed. The quantity of continental stores which were consumed, cannot now be accurately ascertained; accounts vary considerably. From the best information which can be obtained, there were about 3,000 barrels of pork, more than 1,000 barrels of flour, several hundred barrels of beef, 1,600 tents, 2,000 bushels of grain, besides many other valuable articles, such as rum, wine, rice, army carriages, etc.”

The following is an account of the private losses sustained by individuals in the town of Danbury, in consequence of the enemy’s incursion in that place; according to an estimate made thereof by a committee appointed to apprise the same; with the names of those who were principal losers.

	£	S.	D.
Mr. John McLean.....	2492	10	7
Capt. Ezra Starr.....	2296	0	0
Capt. Daniel Taylor.....	984	0	2
Col. Joseph P. Cook.....	953	9	6
Major Eli Maggatt.....	116	2	2
Capt. James Clark.....	822	16	6
Major Taylor .....	700	16	2
Comfort Hoyt, Jr. ....	651	15	1
Thaddeus Benedict, Esq. ....	521	19	6
David Wood .....	433	1	0
Joseph Wildman .....	417	8	4

Dr. John Wood .....	394	3	4
Matthew Benedict, Jun. ....	334	11	0
Rev. Ebenezer White.....	327	11	0
Jonah Benedict .....	309	9	8
Matthew Benedict .....	265	4	8
Jabez Rockwell .....	237	16	2
Zadock Benedict .....	169	17	0
Benjamin Sperry .....	169	16	3

Which, with a number of smaller losses ascertained by said committee, amount in the whole to £15,862,9s.7d. lawful money, lost by individuals in consequence of that town being made the repository of public stores. There is, therefore, the greatest reason that the public should not only grant speedy relief to the sufferers, (many of whom are reduced to extreme want), but also that they should have the public faith pledged for the amount of those losses; which were estimated not according to the exorbitant prices at the present time, but in most instances as the articles cost before this war commenced.”

This report was accepted by the Assembly, and ordered to be lodged on file, to perpetuate the evidence of the loss of each person and when Congress should order a compensation, to make out the claims of sufferers. Converted into present day money the private loses read as follows: Mr. John McLean, \$12,462.64; Captain Ezra Starr, \$11,480; Captain Daniel Taylor, \$4,932; Colonel Jos. P. Cooke, \$4,767.50; Major Eli Mygatt, \$580.30; Captain James Clark, \$4,112.62; Major Taylor, \$3,504; Comfort Hoyt, Jr., \$3,258.77; Thaddeus Benedict, Esq., \$2,610; Benjamin Sperry, \$948.00; David Wood, \$2,165.24; Joseph Wildman, \$2,087.00; Dr. John Wood, \$1,970.80; Matthew Benedict, \$1,672.50; Rev. Ebenezer White, \$1,637.60; Jonah Benedict, \$1,547.50; Matthew Benedict, \$1,026.16; Jabez Rockwell, \$1,189.00; Zadock Benedict, \$849.25.

The total loss as thus determined by the committee amounts to nearly \$81,000, although we learn that Danbury's grand list in 1775, at the beginning of the Revolution, was \$142,507.66.

In May, 1777, the month following the burning, Governor Trumbull issued, at the suggestion of the General Assembly, a proclamation. The document is a sorry confession of man's inhumanity to man, especially to his neighbor. It appears from this paper that a lot of shiftless and mercenary wretches took advantage of the appearance of the enemy here to burn the houses and steal the portable property of Danburians and others who escaped the raid of the British. The proclamation calls upon these graceless offenders to immediately restore such property and make good such losses, or suffer the severe penalties of the law.

Upon a petition in 1791, of the inhabitants of the town of Fairfield and Norwalk, in Fairfield County, the great losses occasioned by the devastations of the British during the war, were shown to the General Assembly; on which they prayed for remuneration from the State. A committee was appointed by the Legislature, in May 1791, to ascertain from documents in the public offices, the losses, not only of the petitioners, but of others who had been sufferers under similar circumstances, that had been estimated in conformity to previous acts of the Assembly, such as had been occasioned by incursions of the enemy during the war. The Assembly, therefore, in May, 1792, by a resolution, released and quit-claimed, to the sufferers, named on the State record, or to their legal representatives, if deceased, and to their heirs and assigns forever, 500,000 acres of land, owned by Connecticut, situated west of Pennsylvania, bounded north on Lake Erie, beginning at the west line of said lands, and extending eastward to a line running northerly and southerly parallel to the east line of said tract of land owned by this State, and extending the whole width of said lands, and easterly so far as to comprise said quantity of 500,000 acres, (exclusive of former grants to sufferers, if any) to be divided among said sufferers and their legal representatives, in proportion to the several sums annexed to the names on record. This land is located in Huron County, in the State of Ohio, and is known as the Western Reserve or the "fire lands".

Joseph Wildman lived where stands the residence of F. E. Hartwell, on West Street, near Main. In the award of land to the sufferers he received fourteen hundred acres in Ohio. So little did he value it that he sold it in exchange for a horse. A part of the flourishing city of Sandusky is on that land, and is now worth millions of dollars. The singular sale was made with the right of redemption within thirty years. About a year or so after the expiration of that time, and when the property began to be quite valuable, Joseph's heirs unfortunately discovered this clause in the deed.

The Probate records were removed to New Fairfield, and thus preserved; but the Town records, by reason of the absence or negligence of the Town Clerk, remained in his dwelling house, which was burnt on the following day. The Legislature afterwards provided all the remedies for repairing the loss of the Town records, the case admitted of.

The following entry in the Records of the State lends additional light on the raid—

Sept. 21, 1777. By a petition of Ozias Marvin, of Norwalk, dated 21st Sept., 1777, it appears that at the time the British troops landed at Compo and marched to Danbury, the militia of Norwalk, Stamford, &c., were stationed the first night at Saugatuck, near where the enemy landed for the purpose of watching the movements of the enemy during the night—the weather was cold and chilly and the militia complained of the want of refreshments, and Mr. Marvin furnished them with forty-five gallons of rum, out of which he filled twenty-four case bottles to carry with them on their march to Danbury, together with sixty pounds of dried beef, eight pounds of sugar, &c. That the people generally near Compo, deserted their houses, and Capt. Marvin was with his company, during the night watching the enemy, and the next morning pursued them, and continued until they returned to their ships.

During the catastrophe to Danbury there was an army hospital in existence here. It was established the month before, and was not touched by the British. The location was on what is now called Park Avenue, at the junction of Pleasant Street.

The soldiers who died at the hospital were buried in a plot of ground on Pleasant Street, near the corner of Park Avenue. This burial-place was held sacred by the early owners who would not have it ploughed. Some years after it was rented, and the tenant, being either ignorant of its former use or extremely practical in his views, turned up with his plough many bones and some relics in metal.

The hospital itself was a one-storied building with a large garret in its steep roof. The first floor was divided into four rooms; the garret was of one room. The building was torn down many years ago.

By a letter, sent by Col. Hart, dated New York, May 2, 1777, directed to Squire Sanford of Redding, and signed by James Rogers, it appears that the following persons, who were taken prisoners in the expedition at Danbury, and carried to New York, were Daniel Chapman, Jabez Frost, Daniel Sanford, Timothy Parson, David Fairchild, Daniel Meeker, Russell Bartlet, James Rogers, Oliver Sanford, Nathaniel Squire, Ezekiel Fairchild, Stephen Betts, Jonas Platt, and Thomas Couch, of Redding, John Bartram, Matthew Benedict, Benjamin Sperry, John Porter, Jonathan Starr, William Roberts, Jacob Gray, Aaron Gray Knap, of Danbury; Benjamin Meeker, John Olmsted, John Dimon, Benjamin Banks, David Burr, Peter Blackman, Ephraim Burr, Nathan Beers, Caleb Disbros, Levi Disbrow, and Peter Williams, of the town of Fairfield; Israel Chapman, of Salem; James Crawford and Newton Crawford, of Pound Ridge; Simeon Minor, of Woodbury; Benjamin Keeler, of Wilton; John Wright, of Norwich; Job Slocum, of Oblong; James and Benjamin Northrop and John Smith, of Ridgefield; in whose behalf Mr. Rogers wrote the letter, in which they requested their friends in Connecticut, to send to them by Col. Hart, all the hard money they could collect, who had agreed to advertise when he should return to New York, and where the money should be left for said prisoners; each man's money to be put up by itself with his name on it.

As the battle of Lexington was followed by a retaliatory act

on the part of Connecticut, so the predatory incursions of Tryon produced a like result.

General Samuel Holden Parsons, one of the most heroic soldiers as well as one of the best lawyers and most scholarly writers of the revolutionary period, had already discovered that there was a large deposit of military stores laid up for the use of the British army at Sag Harbor, and now determined to avenge the insult offered to Connecticut, by seizing and destroying them. He employed Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs to execute this mission. Accordingly, Meigs, on the 21st of May, left New Haven for Guilford, with what men he could muster, in thirteen whaleboats. At Guilford he obtained some reinforcements, and on the 23d, crossed the sound with one hundred and seventy men, under convoy of two armed sloops. He took along with his company another sloop, that was unarmed, to bring off the prisoners that he had counted upon as a part of his booty. He reached the north branch of the island, near Southhold, at six o'clock in the evening, and there took his whale-boats, with most of his men, overland to the bay, where they again embarked. About midnight they found themselves on the other side of the bay, only four miles from Sag Harbor. They landed under the cover of a thick wood, where Colonel Meigs left the boats in care of a guard, and advanced with the main body, amounting to about one hundred and twenty men, in excellent order. He arrived at Sag Harbor about two o'clock, and dividing the company into several parties, made an attack upon all the guards at once, with fixed bayonets. The alarm was soon given, and a schooner that had been stationed there with seventy men, and twelve guns, opened a heavy fire upon them.

Colonel Meigs attacked them with great spirit, killed some of them, and took nearly all the rest prisoners. Only six escaped by flight. He also set fire to the vessels and forage. He destroyed twelve brigs and sloops, one hundred tons of pressed hay, a large quantity of grain, ten hogsheads of rum, and a great amount of merchandise. By two o'clock in the afternoon

he returned to Guilford with ninety prisoners. In a little more than twenty-four hours, he had traveled by land and water a distance of ninety miles, without the loss of a man. Congress voted him an elegant sword as a reward of his address and valor. He accomplished as much by this expedition as Tryon had done at Danbury, except that he burned no dwelling-houses, mutilated no churches, and drove from their homes no women and children. It had always been the policy of Connecticut to wage war only with men!



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